

# **INDIANA SUPREME COURT COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**



## **TRAINING GRANT ANNUAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT October 1, 2009-September 30, 2010**

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

This annual program assessment report is being submitted in accordance with the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families program instruction ACYF-CB-06-05. During this reporting period, Court Improvement Program Training Grant funds were used to provide judicial education and to provide sub-grants for local, regional and statewide training programs designed to improve the safety, well-being and permanency of children and families in the child welfare system.

## **II. SERVICES, PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS SUPPORTED WITH COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM TRAINING GRANT FUNDS**

- A. **Annual Juvenile Judges Conference.** The Court Improvement Program sponsored the annual conference held June 24-25, 2010. One hundred-fifteen (115) judicial officers from across the state attended the conference.
- B. **Professional Development Scholarships.** The Court Improvement Program awarded four (4) professional development scholarships to judicial officers with juvenile court jurisdiction to help defray the cost of attending child welfare related trainings, seminars or conferences and/or for the cost of membership in a national child welfare related professional organization.
- C. **Court Improvement Program Sub-grants.** The Court Improvement Program approved the following sub-grants during this reporting period:

Allen Superior Court, Family Relations Division. Funds will be used to provide ongoing training to court staff, Department of Child Services staff, GAL/CASA, pauper attorneys, and service providers who are working with the Mental Health Specialty Court. The families involved in the Mental Health Program have unique needs, which require ongoing training to keep up on the latest treatments and medications required for more positive outcomes.

Bartholomew Circuit Court. Funds will be used to host training events on the role of CASA; adoption and permanency in CHINS cases; and to sponsor a County Children's summit.

Child Advocates. Funds awarded to support a two day workshop on "Courts Catalyzing Change-Disproportionality and Cultural Competency". The workshop was a collaborative effort with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Child Advocates, and representative stakeholders involved in CHINS cases in Marion County.

Elkhart Circuit Court, Juvenile Division. Funds awarded to support the second annual Elkhart County Juvenile Summit.

Funds will also be used to sponsor a community summit to train juvenile court participants on information sharing.

Kid's Voice of Indiana. Funds will be used to expand the free website to post updated information on CHINS, TPR and adoption law. Funds will also be used to produce and distribute a Foster Parent's Guide to the CHINS and TPR process.

LaPorte Circuit Court. Funds will be used to support the Annual Conference on Youth sponsored by the court. The conference will address issues facing children in all facets of the CHINS and delinquency systems. Two of the issues that will be addressed include better planning of life skills for children in independent living programs, and youth who are initially identified as delinquent due to a runaway charge, but should truly be considered a CHINS due to the reasons for their attempts to leave the home.

Marion Superior Court, Juvenile Division. Funds will be used to provide “Undoing Racism” training to Marion County child welfare stakeholders. This training will be offered as part of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the Indianapolis Model Court initiative to reduce disproportionality in the Marion County child welfare system.

Vanderburgh Superior Court. Funds will be used to allow CHINS drug court staff to attend the annual national drug court conference for drug court professionals.

Youth Law T.E.A.M. of Indiana, Inc. Funds will be used to continue providing regional education advocacy trainings to defense attorneys, Department of Child Services staff, GAL/CASA’s, foster parents, biological parents, probation officers and court staff for CHINS involved youth. Funds will also be used to develop an education portfolio.

### **III. OVERALL PROGRESS TOWARDS THE GOALS DELINEATED IN THE TRAINING GRANT STRATEGIC PLAN**

#### **A. Collaborative Training-Statewide**

Statewide Summit. During this reporting period, the Court Improvement Program grant administrator and the Child Welfare Improvement Committee discussed plans for a collaborative conference to be held in June 2011 in conjunction with the Annual Juvenile Judges Conference. The details for this event have not yet been finalized.

Develop Training video on Termination of Parental Rights. This activity has been completed. In February 2008, the Court Improvement Program and the Indiana Department of Child Services hosted a training program for child welfare stakeholders on Indiana’s TPR process. The Court Improvement Program developed a written description of a case and role profiles. The facts and profiles were used to present the case as if it were an actual trial. The training session was videotaped by students from Ball State University’s Institute for Digital Entertainment and Education. The video is currently being used by the by the Department of Child Services to help train new workers. The video will also be made available to other child welfare stakeholders upon request.

Develop training DVD on Youth in Foster Care. This activity will not be initiated. The Department of Child Services developed and produced the training video in 2008.

Distribute pamphlets that explain the Children in Need of Services (CHINS) process. This activity has been completed. The Court Improvement Program Executive Committee awarded a

sub-grant to the Indiana Association of Residential Child Care Agencies (IARCCA) in 2008 to update and distribute two resource guides, *"In the Child's Best Interest: A Practical Guide to Assist Parents Through the Children in Need of Services (CHINS) Process"* and *In The Child's Best Interest: A Practical Guide to Assist Professionals Through the CHINS process."* Both resource guides have been updated and distributed to child welfare stakeholders across the state.

*Educational Advocacy for Youth in Foster Care.* The Court Improvement Program Executive Committee awarded a sub-grant to Youth Law T.E.A.M. of Indiana in 2008 to update and revise the Education Advocacy Training Manual and to develop a training module for child welfare stakeholders. Revisions to the education advocacy manual have been completed and, with the support of the Indiana Office of Guardian Ad Litem/Court Appointed Special Advocate (GAL/CASA), Education Advocacy training has been provided to GAL/CASA's, courts, Department of Child Services staff, foster parents, birth parents and other child welfare stakeholders across the state.

- B. **Regional Multi-disciplinary Training on Practice Reform.** This activity has been completed. Regional trainings on the Department of Child Services practice reform were conducted in 2008.
- C. **Collaborative Training.** In response to the 2007 Child and Family Service Review ("CFSR") and the Program Improvement Plan ("PIP), the Court Improvement Program Grant Administrator, Indiana Judicial Center staff and Department of Child Services staff developed a training curriculum on permanency planning. The training curriculum was presented regionally via videoconference on four separate days in November 2010. Staff of the Indiana Judicial Center and Department of Child Services served as instructors for the training sessions. Approximately 308 judicial officers, Department of Child Services staff, GAL/CASA's, probation officers, and public defenders attended the training sessions.
- D. **Local Training.** This is an on-going activity. Eight sub-grants were awarded during this reporting period to support local and regional training events and other programs designed to improve the child welfare system.
- E. **Judicial Training.** This is an on-going activity. The Court Improvement Program sponsored the annual juvenile judges conference held June 24-25, 2010. The conference provided training sessions on Juvenile Risk Assessments; Indiana Department of Corrections, Youth Services Programs; Paternity, Recent Legislation and Case Law; and Timely Permanency in CHINS cases.

The session on timely permanency in CHINS cases was jointly developed with the Department of Child Services. The session was designed to address the permanency related findings in the 2007 CFSR and the subsequent Program Improvement Plan.

Judge Steven Rideout (ret.), consultant with the ABA National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues opened the session with an overview of the Court related permanency findings and educated the judges on the court's role in achieving timely permanency. James Payne, Director of the Indiana Department of Child Services informed the judges of changes in DCS practice and procedures that are being implemented to address timely

permanency for children. Director Payne also provided the judges with data on the number of reports taken, placements and case length, and distributed DCS “stuck cases” reports to counties that had cases in which a TPR had been filed and no disposition had been entered on the case within 6 months of the filing of the petition. The session concluded with a panel discussion on delays in achieving permanency.

- F. **Judicial Training for Newly Elected Juvenile Court Judges.** This is an on-going activity. Judicial training for newly elected judges is held on a bi-annual basis. The next training is scheduled for January 24-28, 2011. There will be training sessions for judges with juvenile court jurisdiction on the CHINS, TPR and delinquency process.
- G. **Court Personnel Training.** The Court Improvement Program awarded four professional development scholarships to judicial officers with juvenile court jurisdiction to help defray the cost of attending child welfare related trainings, seminars or conferences and/or for the cost of membership in a national child welfare related professional organization.
- H. **Provide Spanish Training to Court Personnel.** This is an on-going activity. The Indiana Supreme Court and Ivy Tech Community College developed a Spanish training course for court personnel. The Court Improvement Program provides funding for eligible juvenile court and CASA staff to attend the training sessions.
- I. **Multi-Disciplinary Training-Youth in Transition.** This project is expected to be initiated in 2011. The Child Welfare Improvement Committee will research and review state and federal requirements on information required to be provided to youth transitioning from foster care; review information that is currently being distributed to these youth by DCS and other youth serving organizations that have already been developed to see if there are any required information that is not already being developed. If there is additional information that is not already developed and distributed then the Child Welfare Improvement Committee will develop a plan for providing the information.
- J. **Evaluation.** The Court Improvement Program has not conducted a formal study of the effectiveness of training sub-grants, however, sub-grantees are required to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and submit the results of their evaluations at the end of their grant term. During this reporting period the following program evaluations were received:

Allen Superior Court, Family Relations Division. Funds awarded to support the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Youth. Grant Period October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010. The conference was hosted by the Allen Superior Court, Family Relations Division, Indiana Department of Child Services, Allen County office; Great KIDS make Great COMMUNITIES and other partners. Approximately 700 youth and family service professionals registered for the conference. The Conference featured four keynote speakers and seven workshops on such topics as: Creating Circles of Courage for Young People; Working with Burmese Refugee Families: Culture and Context; Habitudes: The Art of Changing Culture; Strength-Based Approach to Supporting Families; Pathways from Childhood Trauma to Adolescent Violence; Creating Rainbows: An Interactive Approach for Cross-Cultural Communication; and Question, Persuade, Respond to Student Suicide.

Grant funds were also awarded to provide quarterly education and training to court staff, Department of Child Services staff, GAL/CASA, pauper attorneys, and service providers who work in the Mental Health Specialty Court. The following topics were covered during the quarterly sessions: Dual Diagnosis, Chemical Dependency and Mental Illness; Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; Borderline Personality Disorder; Teens and Depression; and Reactive Attachment Disorder.

Bartholomew County. Funds were used to host a Children's Summit on child abuse and neglect and to train the local community mental health center on the evidence-based curriculum "Moving On" for substance abusing mothers in CHINS cases. This curriculum goes beyond traditional Intensive Outpatient Programs and looks at all other contributing factors for female substance users. The primary goal of the program is to provide women with alternatives and choices free from substance abuse by assisting them to identify and mobilize both personal and community resources.

Child Advocates. Funds were awarded to support a two day workshop on "*Courts Catalyzing Change-Disproportionality and Cultural Competency*". The workshop was a collaborative effort with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Child Advocates, and representative stakeholders involved in CHINS cases in Marion County. National Speakers presented materials on institutional racism, institutional awareness of cultural competency issues, and helped court participants develop an action plan to address such issues. More than 100 people involved in various disciplines of the Marion County child welfare system attended.

Elkhart Circuit Court, Juvenile Division. Grant awarded to support the second annual juvenile summit on children held in February 2010. More than two hundred people attended the summit. Attendees include DCS case managers; service providers, school officials, mental health professionals, law enforcement, judicial officers, CASA, probation officers, head start, prosecutors and juvenile court staff. The purpose of the summit was to reinforce the spirit of cooperation and collaboration required to successfully provide juvenile services to a community in need; and to provide a forum to bring the participants in juvenile justice system together in order to meet face to face, providing an opportunity to network, plan and collaborate.

Kid's Voice, Inc. Grant awarded to provide one free copy of the 2009 Cumulative Supplement to the CHINS Deskbook to the judiciary in each county and to each GAL/CASA Program. Grant period July 1, 2009-September 30, 2010. The 2009 cumulative supplement contains over 600 pages of statutes and case law. It includes fourteen chapters comprising all significant changes in CHINS, Termination of Parental Rights, paternity, guardianship and adoption since the publication of the first CHINS Deskbook in 2001 and includes statutory changes effective July 1, 2009.

Youth Law T.E.A.M. of Indiana. Grant awarded to provide Education Advocacy Training to GAL/CASA, courts, DCS staff, probation officers, foster parents and biological parents across the state. Grant period July 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010. Nine 3 1/2 hour interactive training sessions were conducted throughout the state. Educational Advocacy technical

assistance was also provided to GAL/CASAs, foster parents, DCS staff, and biological parents by phone contact and via the Youth Law T.E.A.M. website.

Since the inception of the Comprehensive Education Advocacy Program in 2008, 579 individuals have been trained. A database of all individuals who successfully complete the Education Advocacy Training program and are willing to act as an Educational Surrogate Parent (“ESP”) in special education proceedings is being maintained.

#### **ANY FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS OR REPORTS OF THE STATEWIDE TASK FORCE**

There were no findings, recommendations or reports issued by the Statewide Task Force during this reporting period.

#### **IV. RESULTS OF ANY ASSESSMENT OF ACTIVITIES FUNDED DURING THE PROGRAM PERIOD**

There was no assessment of activities conducted or funded during this reporting period.

#### **V. CONCLUSION**

The Indiana Court Improvement Program continues to work toward implementation of the strategic plan. The Indiana Supreme Court, Court Improvement Program, Indiana Department of Child Services and the statewide multi-disciplinary task force will continue to work closely to provide for the safety, permanence and well-being of children in the Indiana foster care system in the upcoming year.